



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3015747

Address: 1141 Martin Luther King Jr. Way

Applicant: Martin Squared LLC

Date of Meeting: 26 February 2014

Board Members Present: Mike Austin  
Dawn Bushnaq  
Dan Foltz  
Natalie Gualy  
Christina Orr-Cahall

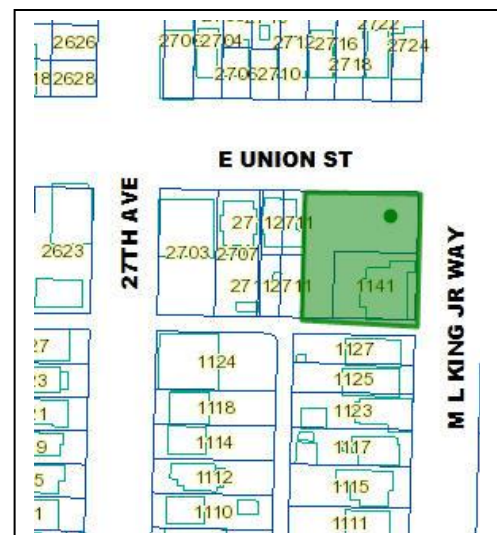
Board Members Absent: Ric Cochrane

DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial Two with a 40' height limit.

Zoning Patterns: The NC2 40 zone forms a small node on the south side of E. Union St. between 29<sup>th</sup> Ave and the site's west property line. Multi-family Lowrise One and Two (LR1, LR2) zones flank E. Union from 29<sup>th</sup> Ave to a larger NC2 corridor along E. Union from 25<sup>th</sup> Ave. to 18th Ave. The larger surrounding vicinity possesses a Single Family 5000 zone classification.



Lot Area:	14,309 square feet comprising two parcels. According to city maps, the site contours slope inward by roughly six feet.
Current Development:	A two-story apartment building on the southeast parcel. Vacant lot on the northwest parcel.
Access:	East Union St., MLK Jr. Way and a T-shape alley configuration.
Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character:	<p>The E. Union and MLK Way intersection possesses a mix of uses and architectural sensibilities promoting a neighborhood pedestrian orientation. The largest development in the immediate vicinity, the Grocery Outlet, belies this character with its parking lot situated between the two streets and the structure. The rest of the neighborhood has a mix of single family houses, townhouses, two and three story apartment buildings and small commercial establishments facing the two arterials.</p> <p>The two streets link several neighborhoods. E. Union connects Capitol Hill to Madrona and MLK runs from Madison Valley to the Rainier Valley and beyond.</p>
ECAs:	No mapped environmental critical areas

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a four-story mixed use structure containing 50 dwelling units and 7,500 sq. ft. of commercial space on the first floor. Parking for 25 vehicles will be provided in a below-grade garage. The existing multi-family structure will be demolished.

## DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant provided illustrations of three basic massing options. Scheme A, “L-Shape”, anchors the MLK Way and E. Union corner with a commercial use and a projecting upper level residential mass that accentuates the ground floor retail/office and live/work units. A residential entry on E. Union connects the streetscape to the circulation tower at the intersection of the two wings. The L-shape massing forms an open area at the southwest corner of the site along the alley. An enclosed garage entry and ramp leading to a below grade parking area comprises a portion of the open area. A terraced garden would sit above the enclosed garage ramp.

The building program for Scheme B consumes most of the site. Open space for the most part occupies the roof top. The three floors of upper level residential units facing east and west are arranged along a double loaded corridor. In this scheme, the residential floors project over the ground floor level. The residential and garage entries are in a similar location to Scheme A. Scheme C forms an U-shape with the open space facing west. Combined with an upper level

setback, the massing provides some relief for the adjacent townhouses. The garage entrance off the alley shifts closer to MLK Way than the other schemes.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Twelve members of the public affixed their names to the Early Design Review meeting sign-in sheet. The speakers raised the following issues:

### *Landscaping / Right of Way*

- The E. Union right of way has great potential for interesting landscaping.
- How is the pedestrian experience realized? How does the streetscape engage with the properties to the west and south?
- Pay attention to how the spaces in front of the live/work units interact with the streetscape.
- Use the 30' right of way to address stormwater management issues.
- Ensure the installation of the garden on top of the building with solar panels.
- Do more to address the corner of the building at E. Union and MLK Way.

### *Built Form / Massing*

- Prefers Option A with its south facing courtyard and urban street wall.
- Use a pitched roof instead of making the project a flat box.

### *Aesthetics*

- Design the structure to be sympathetic to the bungalows and craftsman style houses in the neighborhood.
- Don't use bright colors. Make the building fit gracefully into the neighborhood.

### *Other*

- Board judgment should not be made for the departures until further refinement of the project.
- The project needs more density. The neighborhood needs more people.
- The lower density floor area ratio is appealing as it accommodates a large amount of green space.
- The project needs more parking spaces. Parking spillover will negatively impact the neighborhood.

## **PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

## **A. Site Planning**

- A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics.** The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.

The “L-shape” option with its southwest facing courtyard and street wall received Board commendation. The other schemes appeared less suitable for the site.

- A-2 Streetscape Compatibility.** The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

Attributes of the facades facing the two streets should include generous amounts of transparency and building form that engages the pedestrian.

- A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street.** Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

- A-4 Human Activity.** New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

The storefront design and the landscaping along the rights of way, especially along E. Union, should serve to enhance the pedestrian sphere: large storefront windows, a welcoming residential entrance, space for congregating, and a visible and functional corner.

- A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites.** Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.

Two of the departure requests impact the adjacent townhouses. Discussed in guidance B-1 below and in the departure section near the end of this report, the requests, if the applicant continues to pursue, should be further analyzed for the Board.

- A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street.** For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.

- A-7 Residential Open Space.** Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

As the design for the courtyard evolves, consider accessibility issues as the steps may prohibit use of portions of the garden. Also, decide whether the ground floor units directly facing the courtyard have private gardens associated with the entries.

- A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access.** Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.

- A-10 Corner Lots.** Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.

Enhance the corner, especially at the ground level, to create a pleasing environment for pedestrians and to anchor this visible intersection.

## **B. Height, Bulk and Scale**

- B-1 Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility. Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.**

The Board endorsed the “L-shape” scheme after questioning the applicant. Two of the four requested departures (extending the massing) at the proposal’s northwest corner may impact the adjacent townhouses. The building’s relationship to these townhouses may be improved if the south elevation and southwest corner of the northern leg of the “L” were set back at level four to allow greater solar exposure from the south. At present the floor plans project toward the courtyard, or south, as the building rises. The Board asked for more analysis of the relationship between the two departures and the townhouses to justify the requests. Provide realistic sections, an overlay of window placement and diagrams to assist in explaining the need for the departures.

## **C. Architectural Elements and Materials**

- C-1 Architectural Context. New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.**

Discussion focused on building styles given the plethora of early 20<sup>th</sup> century homes and modest walkup townhouses and apartment buildings nearby. The Board did not choose to convey opinions about roof forms and potential material choices. As one citizen stated at the meeting, the building should fit gracefully into the neighborhood. The Board came to understand that the images in the EDG packet (pp. 18-19) represent an extension of the massing studies and not necessarily the character of the materials, color or detailing of the cornice and projecting bays.

- C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency. Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.**

As the building design evolves, this guideline increases in importance. The Board will focus closely on project compliance.

- C-3 Human Scale. The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements, and details to achieve a good human scale.**

The photos in the back of the packet illustrating mixed use and townhouse projects completed by The Madrona Co. convey a cognizance of providing human scale detail at the ground level.

- C-4 Exterior Finish Materials. Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.**

See guidance for C-1.

<b>D. Pedestrian Environment</b>
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- D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances. Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.**

At the meeting, the nature of the E. Union and MLK corner open space and its relationship to the building lacked design exploration. A well-designed corner and its capacious conterminous E. Union right of way will contribute to the future success of the building and the intersection.

- D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.**

- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas. Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.**

The location of the solid waste storage area directly off the alley appears appropriate. Ensure that the west wall facing the courtyard visually complements the communal courtyard.

- D-7 Personal Safety and Security. Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.**

- D-9 Commercial Signage. Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.**

By the Recommendation meeting, provide a concept signage plan for the commercial uses.

- D-10 Commercial Lighting. Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.**

Provide exterior lighting along the street frontages and within the courtyard to ensure safety and to enhance the pedestrian realm. Provide a concept lighting plan by the Recommendation meeting.

- D-11 Commercial Transparency. Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.**

Design the live/work units to possess the storefront characteristics of commercial uses. The storefront assemblages for the commercial use and the live/work ought to appear seamless.

- D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions. For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and a visually interesting street front for pedestrians. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.**

Create a clear relationship between the primary residential entrance on E. Union and the broad sidewalk and planting strip.

## **E. Landscaping**

- E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites. Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.**

In the concept drawing for the landscaping, the sidewalks do not directly adjoin the properties to the west and south across the alley. The transition between the properties will need to be obvious and serviceable to ensure pedestrian ease.

- E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site. Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture, and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.**

By the Recommendation meeting, provide sections and elevations of the courtyard particularly of the terracing above the garage ramp. The garden has three elements the pathway circumnavigating it, the seating area and the terrace above the garage ramp. Illustrate the terrace walls and the how the courtyard functions.

**E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions. The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.**

The wide right of way along E. Union St possess great potential for creating public space and developing a garden that complements the building and its functions along the street frontage. The concept design appears, at least in two-dimensions, more static than the Board's aspirations. As noted by the landscape architect, Union St. contains signs of an emerging (and interesting) landscape corridor. The Chloe on the corner of 14<sup>th</sup> Ave owns a relatively sophisticated court anchored by restaurants; the small commercial node at 21<sup>st</sup> Ave has playful sculptures and landscape furniture in the right of way endowing the intersection with personality. The design of the subject corner and the E. Union right of way in front of the building ought to further enhance the E. Union renaissance.

## **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departures were requested:

- 1) Side setback abutting a residential zone (SMC.23.47A.014B.3): The Code requires that a residential structure along a side lot that abuts a lot in a residential zone have a 15 foot setback for portions of the structure above 13 feet in height. For each portion of a structure above 40 feet in height, additional setback is required at the rate of two feet of setback for every ten feet exceeding 40 feet in height. The applicant proposes a ten foot setback above 13 feet.

The Board conveyed its unease with this request without accurate analysis showing impacts on the adjacent townhouses and what measures or techniques could be used to alleviate the added mass.

- 2) Side Setback Abutting a Residential Zone (SMC.23.47A.014B.1): A setback is required where a lot abuts the intersection of a side lot line and front lot line of a lot in a residential zone. The required setback forms a triangular area with two of its legs 15 feet in length. The applicant proposes encroachments into the triangle at floor levels 1, 2 and 3.



For similar reasons stated in departure request # 1, the Board stated its apprehension at accepting the departure request without more extensive analysis of the impacts to the adjacent property.

- 3) Structural Building Overhang (SMC.23.53.035). The Code prescribes a maximum projecting bay depth of three feet and a maximum of 9 feet along a line parallel to the line establishing the open area. The bay has required angled sides maximum total square feet of 36 feet. The applicant proposes a bay shape of five feet by eight feet with an area of 40 square feet.

The Board will evaluate this request based on the design quality of the facades.

- 4) Structural Building Overhang (SMC.23.53.035): The Code requires a maximum one foot projecting depth for a cornice. The applicant proposes 2'6".

The Board will evaluate this request based on the design quality of the facades.

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should move forwards to MUP Application in response to the guidance provided at this meeting.

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